

# How to Survive an Om Conference

by George Verwer

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*To survive and thrive in an OM conference, prioritize prayer, fellowship, and worship, and learn to relax about finding God's will and consider others.*

**Duration:** 43:49

**Scripture:** Psalm 95:6, Matthew 6:33, Acts 4:31, Romans 12:2, Philippians 2:3, Philippians 4:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

**Topics:** "Conference"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of trusting God and exercising faith in small ways rather than relying on occasional big gifts. He refers to Philippians 4:8, which encourages believers to focus on what is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. The speaker also highlights the significance of controlling one's mind and thinking positively, stating that this is not a new psychology but an old theology found in the Bible. Additionally, he emphasizes the importance of fellowship and worship in experiencing the fullness and control of the Holy Spirit.

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## Transcript

Father, we thank you that you've brought us all here safely. We thank you for all that you've been doing. We thank you for so many lives that have been touched, so many precious souls that have been converted this summer.

And Lord, we are believing you for great things in these days together. Speak to us from your word. In Jesus' name, amen.

We have many burdens for this conference, and Acts 4.31 speaks about one of them. When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. Prayer, communion with God, is the absolute priority of these days together.

Our burden is for revival, first of all, personal revival. That's the privilege of every believer, to live in personal revival. I believe some of you, this summer, started to learn something about that glorious, Spirit-controlled way of life.

I hope you're not discouraged by some of your failures. Revival is not perfection. Revival doesn't destroy your humanity.

And I think you've learned that this summer. Yes, we would like to see revival. There will be teaching.

There will be training. There will be many things in these days. This is not a Bible school.

This is not a Christian holiday camp. This is a spiritual boot camp, a spiritual training ground for total war this coming year against the forces of darkness across the world. Very important to understand that.

Now, we're not going to get into that tonight. Some of that gets a little bit heavy. We don't want to just blow you right out of your chair before you barely get in it.

And we want you to get a good night's sleep. Sleep is very important. That's why we want people after 10.30 or at the latest 11 to be quiet.

It's a way of esteeming other people. And a lot of families are here. A lot of children are here.

Some have been a very intensive schedule. They desperately need a little quiet, a little sleep. I want to speak tonight on how to survive at an OM conference.

I've had a few of these conferences. Almost every single September minus none, every single September since 1961. That was a very small one in Madrid, Spain.

I'll never forget it. I can remember even some of the things Dale Roton said. One of the things he said in a meeting was, never harden your heart against sin.

No matter how many times you fail. No matter how many times you fall on your nose. Never harden your heart against sin.

I remember something else from that conference. That's over 20 years ago. I remember playing the Messiah.

I'm a great lover of music. So I invited on a volunteer basis. Maybe it was even compulsory, I don't remember.

Everybody came in and they listened to the Messiah. I can also remember one prayer meeting out in a field. Crying out to God.

Actually some of those incidents may have been the very next year. A lot of times you get a little mixed up when it's that many years ago. So every September I've had the joy of being in these month-long conferences.

So I've learned a little bit how to survive. I don't particularly like them anymore. But I always experience great blessing when I go to them.

And I know you are going to experience blessing. Whether you initially sort of like conferences and this kind of atmosphere. No matter what, God wants to bless you in these days, in this place.

And it's a miracle we get places like this. We rent this from the Belgian Bible Institute. At a very special rent.

It may cost us maybe three dollars a day or something like that. One pound fifty per day. Six Deutschmarks.

And that is quite amazing. I think that may even include the food. I think we do the food separate.

In this age of inflation, God has just worked miracle after miracle that we could even continue to exist as a fellowship. Because we have no money. On the very first night that we came here.

And I'm going to tell you something that I know it's risky. Some of you won't understand it. But you'll hear about it anyway.

So it's better to tell you. But we prefer you not to write and tell everybody about it because without explanation they don't understand. But in the past weeks we have been crying out.

Before last weekend. Ten days ago. The bills, the unpaid and many of them overdue bills all over the world.

The summer crusade were mounting like a great Mount Everest. And people were praying. How many of you were praying for OM's financial situation during the summer? Raise your hand.

Most of you. Well it was. Does anybody remember what day it was? Was it Saturday? Was it Saturday? Sunday.

I was in my van. And I opened a letter. Now once in a while we get a big gift.

An answer to prayer. A thousand dollars. Or a thousand pounds.

Or five thousand marks. Sometimes, not often, but once in a while we get something really big. Ten thousand.

And as I looked at this check. Raise God a thousand pounds. It wasn't from an Englishman.

It's a man who doesn't want to be known. It was drawn on a Swiss bank, but it wasn't a Swiss person. And as I looked closely I thought.

Ten thousand. And when I read the writing, it said one hundred thousand pounds. I still can hardly believe it.

I got a little excited at that point. And I ran from my van. Everybody was eating I think.

And I made just a very quiet, phlegmatic announcement. God has heard our cries and he has started this conference with one of the biggest bangs of any conference in the history of this world. The man who gave it said, please don't take more than six months to spend it.

In six days it was gone. So we're still praying. Now we'd love to see in some ways a hundred thousand small gifts from God's wonderful people all over the world in answer to prayer.

It's exciting to be in God's work. Yes, God wants us to not just survive at this conference. He wants us to experience great blessing and great answers to prayer.

Let's look at Philippians 4, 8. Let me try this new international version, see what it says. As you know, I try to use different versions. Philippians 4, verse 8. The reason we ask people not to tell and write the general public about these gifts is they often misunderstand.

You see, though that's a lot of money divided by 1,500 people on OM and suddenly it becomes very, very small. And the truth is that we still haven't paid those all even overdue bills. The secret of OM is not big gifts that come occasionally.

The secret is each person exercising his little bit of faith to trust God, and that's what's kept this thing going. Now, when I think of really enjoying and really getting the most out of this conference, I'm driven to Philippians 4, 8. Here we read finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things. Positive living, positive thinking.

That's not some new psychology. That's old theology. That's Bible doctrine.

That if you want to know reality in your spiritual life, if you want to know the fullness and the control of the spirit of the living God, then you have to know how to control your mind and how to think on that which is good and lovely and listed here in Philippians 4. We've seen in our leaders' meetings so many things that at times go wrong, not the way we hoped. As we've listened to the news, we haven't had much time for that. We've heard of the ambassador from France being shot in Lebanon.

The president or prime minister of Iran was killed by bomb. And all kinds of things. Every time you pick up the newspapers.

Negative things. And if you have many contacts in this world, and you're in touch with them, you're hearing negative things. We've heard of the death, the drowning of one of the very close friends, Turkish friends of one of our leaders during this past week.

And as you come into this fellowship, there will be negative things. As you meet different people, there will be negative things. And if you don't want any negative things, then you're in the wrong movement.

I really feel sorry about that. I've been trying to warn people all summer, but it's still not too late. And that's one of the things that will help you survive and enjoy this time.

To be realistic about OM, about the church, and about leaders in OM or in the church, is absolutely basic to spiritual understanding and spiritual growth. In Dr. Schaefer's book, *Ash Heap Lives*, he reminds us that great Christian leaders are men and women of clay feet. And there's a danger.

When you're young, you read a few books, and you get the idea that a Christian leader is somebody really super spiritual. Sort of a combination of George Mueller and Andrew Murray and A.W. Tozer and Hudson Taylor and Billy Graham all rolled into one little package. That's especially difficult for the girls.

And yet we've had cases where sisters in OM, because of the male influence in missionary work, they sort of try to be little men, little semi-feminized men. If you're going to survive this year on OM, you need to have a balanced, relaxed acceptance of yourself. And you need to understand, it takes many years to make a man or a woman of God like some of these people we read about.

And we need to be patient with our spiritual growth. I mentioned to you this summer that book by Lane Adams, *Why Is It Taking So Long to Get Better?* I still feel it's such an important message to the Church of Jesus Christ in our day. It's not a matter of coming into OM for a year and discovering everything in one year.

What are some other very basic principles? I've listed here, learn to relax about finding the will of God. Some of you are a little bit tense. Is it the ship? Is it India? Is it England? Is it France? Will they accept me? What will happen in these next days? And then you've heard, have an interview.

An interview! And some people think of some little childhood experience. They had to go into the school nurse as a little child. And she was going to give an injection.

And she was frightened. Just a little child. Go have your interview with a school nurse.

Now, I don't know about other countries, but in the United States, we have an interesting range of school nurses. Some of them are quite big. Come right in, little Georgie.

How are you today? Endobe! That is an experience that could burn into the rest of your life. It especially could cause trouble later on in marriage. Let's relax about this interview.

Most of these OM leaders are harmless. Some of them are scared of you. As you knock on the door, they won't be waiting there with some big needle.

They'll probably be praying, Mercy, Lord! We're all weak human beings. We don't have some special super laser beam hotline to heaven to find out God's will for your life. We're simply going to talk.

We're going to see how you feel, where is the Lord leading you. And in more than 50% of the cases, people, where they feel and sense the Lord's leading them, the door opens for them to go there. And it's solved.

It's much more difficult when you get there. Then the real work begins. But there are many people that we cannot just immediately say, yes, that door is open for you.

In fact, in many cases, we don't give any immediate answer. We pray. And the field you're interested in has a little talk with the country where you're coming from.

And they pray together. Are you carrying out your own message? Not quite. That's okay.

For some people, it will take almost a whole month to get, you know, God's final seal. Because also we have to see the Lord provide some finance. So let's relax about the will of God.

Let's make our priority the worship of God. In Thessalonians, it says, in everything give thanks. This is the will of God.

And if you feel something's not going right, you just go have a time of thanksgiving. Oh, I've learned to love these woods here. There's some garden.

There's some woods. One of the greatest things that has helped me these past ten days is almost every morning to be up at 6.30, jogging around these woods. And I hope you will somehow get up early and get your old body into action and into the word and prayer.

That is basic for survival and victory here during these days. I need help to get up in the morning. That's all I need.

Especially after a night of prayer. We've had two nights of prayer. So I had a brother not on the van.

My wife doesn't get up at 6.30. And one morning, there was this tremendous, fab, vroom, vroom on the van. And I went to the brother later on. And I said, you know, why were you knocking so loud? He said, oh, I was using my head.

That's the truth. So the next morning, he decides to send someone else. This guy, you know, he goes out.

He's knocking away. He didn't know whether to look in or not. Knocking away.

He was wondering, is he sleeping very hard? He was knocking on the wrong van. So it's not easy to get up early. But I look forward to seeing a few of you out there, Lord willing, tomorrow morning for this little exercise.

Very low profile exercise program. Another important thing to really get the most out of this conference is to learn the way of fellowship. This is a festival of fellowship.

That's been one of the greatest blessings for me these ten days. To fellowship with individuals and to pray together. And I hope you'll learn to take the initiative in the way of fellowship.

Learning to walk in the light. It's a beautiful thing. It's not easy for some people.

But it's God's way. I was reading about a man of God. And after his conversion, the thing that changed his life the most was when he began to honestly share with another brother in Christ his real burdens, his real problems, his real hang-ups, difficulties, sins.

Now, there are people here with a counseling gift. Many of the leaders have that gift. Others can put you in contact with someone who does.

And then, of course, we can learn so much just sharing with one another. We are not trying to in any way push you down one road or manipulate you down some other road. In no way is that our burden for these days.

Yes, we want you to become more Christ-like. But that will mean different things to different people. And if somehow tomorrow morning you end up sleeping in an extra hour, the worst thing you could do is then go around the rest of the day feeling guilty.

That would be more contrary to OM's teaching than anything else. Because as many a morning I can tell you over the past years that I've had to sleep in. And we're all different in energy.

I have excessive energy. I'll have to run tonight even to just get rid of something to be able to sleep. My wife is suffering from fatigue.

She's very, very tired. And she was sort of just looking at me the other day. She said, you know, really, to be honest, just watching you makes me tired.

Marriage is very interesting. We're all different. We're all different levels of spiritual growth.

The way of fellowship. I can tell you that's more important than jogging. It's more important than a lot of things we pound about.

And then another thing that's going to enable us to just enjoy this conference is the way of praise and worship. I'm looking forward to the times of worship. I'll be here the whole conference apart from just a few

days end of this week as I have to go back to England to preach at some very important meetings.

Worship is so important. This is the will of God. We learn to worship.

And we're going to have times of worship and praise. And you can go out for a walk in the woods after lunch in the morning and worship the Lord in this quite nice atmosphere. Just a few other things and then I think we'll call it a day.

Considering others. That's so important. Provoking, the Bible says, provoking one another unto good works.

That's the will of God. Not irritating one another not making a pest of yourself but encouraging. God wants to give many of us a ministry of encouragement.

Now let's be honest. Some of you through the clever workings of the devil for years have had a great ministry of discouragement. And there are discouraged people because of you.

What about, for example, your parents? Are they encouraged because of you? Now there are some cases where for the sake of the gospel there comes the sword into the home as it would be often in a Muslim home. And so some of your parents may be upset with you for the sake of the gospel. I hope you will share that with your leader and pray together with someone about it.

But it may be something else. Lack of consistency of life in the home. That has discouraged your parents at least about you.

Well, don't feel too guilty about that. Because it happens very easily. But work at it.

And ask God to give you that ministry of encouragement and that will be linked with learning how to consider other people. Little things like being quiet at night. Now no matter how much we say that there will be some noise.

And in this noisy planet we have to learn how to get victory over noise. It's not easy for some people. I love quiet.

And I find noise irritates me. But you know you can allow noise to remind you to pray for those who are lost. And if you're woken up at night spend twenty minutes in prayer and probably you'll fall back to sleep.

You win either way. If you stay awake you pray. The devil hates it.

If you fall asleep you get good sleep. The devil hates that. You always win when you pray.

We are not here to learn how to go into spiritual warfare. We are in the spiritual warfare now hating. Satan hates what's happening here even tonight.

So if we are going to survive if we are going to see blessing we must start fervently praying on this very first day of the conference. And then another thing that we need to declare war against let's declare war against worry. First Peter says casting every care every care upon him upon God he careth for you.

He careth for you. That's so beautiful. And I don't know if any of you have some heavy worries on your heart right now.

But let's even together just now cast them upon the Lord. Maybe back home there's a problem. God understands that.

Maybe there's an emotional tension you're in. God understands that. Maybe you've just come from doing something wrong or sinful.

If you've confessed it and put it right with God it's gone. Forgiveness is the whole essence of the message of the New Testament. Satan is the accuser of the brethren.

Always trying to put us down. Always trying to tell us we're no good. He may be trying to tell you you're not ready for this operation of homosexuality.

And the devil comes along and says look this is a spiritual movement what are you doing here? You come with me back home. Think of all the wonderful things you left back home. Oh your mother's favorite cooking you fool.

Look at the slop you're going to eat here. And just think of your lovely bedroom back home. Stereo music.

Water mattress. Conveyor belts to carry you down the stairs to the kitchen. Well I know most of you are not from that background.

When you go up in that dormitory tonight I mean that's something else. For all these years nothing but books. Nothing but books in that building mainly.

One of the biggest Roman Catholic libraries in the entire world in that building. You don't need even one tenth of a carpenter's brain to know that place was not built for people. Look at the stairs.

But they have worked very hard. And they put some beds in there. I haven't seen it since they put the beds in.

I had a fear of that building. Which is the women's section, which is the men's section? And during the summer I'm just desperate to go to the toilet trying to find which is the women's section. Finally by faith I went into the toilet.

Fortunately no one was there because it was a women's toilet. So as you go to sleep in that rather unique sort of Star Wars type of dormitory and you may have a little trouble sleeping tonight the old devil will come right along and he'll say psst, you're a fool you're crazy. He, according to the word of God is the accuser of the brethren but according to the word of God he is also a liar and a deceiver.

Let's recognize him and his dirty tricks even in these first days of this conference. And if you have a special problem pray with somebody and claim the victory together. We've got to learn how to claim the precious power of the blood of Jesus Christ even in these days together.

And we have to make God your goal in these days.

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